

East of the River Chambers of Commerce Association

ERCCA

"Working Together Works Wonders"

East Hartford Chamber of Commerce
Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce
Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
North Central CT Chamber of Commerce
South Windsor Chamber of Commerce
Tolland County Chamber of Commerce

TESTIMONY OF
EAST OF THE RIVER CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE ASSOCIATION (ERCCA)
BEFORE THE
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 10, 2011

RE: HB-5460, AN ACT CONCERNING CAPTIVE AUDIENCE MEETINGS

The East of the River Chambers of Commerce Association (ERCCA) includes over 3500 businesses from the Glastonbury, East Hartford, Manchester, North Central Connecticut, South Windsor and Tolland County Chambers of Commerce.

ERCCA **opposes** HB-5460, An Act Concerning Captive Audience Meetings, which would unnecessarily prohibit employers from speaking with their employees about certain important matters in the workplace. Communications between employers and employees are already governed by federal law and passage of this bill would only subject many business owners to potentially costly and frivolous litigation, as well as stifle their ability to communicate with their employees and others in their workplace.

Passage of this legislation would weaken a Connecticut business' ability to compete with other states. The economic recession has taken a toll on all industry sectors across the state. With an unemployment rates at high levels, it is obvious that Connecticut businesses are already struggling. Now is not the time to add another measure of government intervention that makes Connecticut less attractive for struggling businesses and fledgling entrepreneurs. Instead the state needs to take steps to nurture the growth of small and midsize businesses, not create more regulations for employers.

ERCCA agrees with the statement that:

Employers ought to have the right to speak to workers about issues pertinent to unionization without threatening them. The "captive audience" bill is a muzzle that would keep employers from communicating essential information

"Muzzling Employers; Captive Audience Bill - Ban on Information Meetings Bad For Business," *Hartford Courant*, May 27, 2009.

Therefore, we respectfully urge the committee to **REJECT** HB-5460.

Established more than 20 years ago, ERCCA represents six independent Chambers of Commerce serving over 28 towns in Eastern Connecticut and more than 3,500 business members.